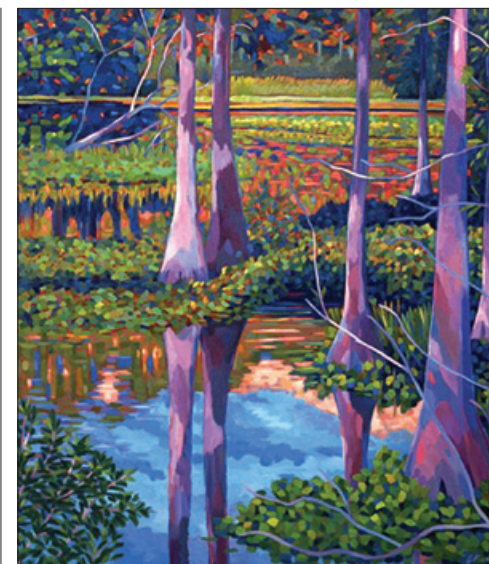


Landscapes extending beyond the horizon



Interior designer H. Allen Holmes of Hobe Sound cherishes diversity, reflected obviously and abundantly in his Design Gallery adjacent to his Bridge Road office. Visitors to this gallery may be both enthralled and challenged with its wide array of semi-figurative and surrealistic pieces by artists Dan Poole, Brian Rutenberg, Mark Davis, Leonard Edmondson, Ynez Johnston, and a dozen others, placed randomly throughout these juxtaposed rooms and demanding a deliberate perusal.

Suddenly, though, while scanning the walls of the studio at a slow pace, I was overpowered by a sense of déjà vu, as if seeing something very familiar and, yet, unknown at the same time: Six stunning paintings by Gary Borse, recently named "Florida Artist of the Year" by Tosca, drew me into the mysterious Florida landscapes that seem to extend beyond the frame.

Why so many works by Gary Borse?

"I am a fifth generation Floridian," says Mr. Holmes. "I am in love with Florida history and her scenery. Gary Borse paints it with his mind's eye. With his paintings, he summons to love and protect her."

He replies with emotion as he guides you through his studio, pointing also to historical maps he has amassed, along with numerous art objects. Our conversation is utterly engaging and revealing on our way to another Borse painting, all of which depict Florida in her galvanizing beauty.

By using close values of reds, greens and blues, Borse allows the viewer to discover a landscape inside the landscape by removing a physical shroud



Florida artist Gary Borse, left, brings another of his popular paintings to the H. Allen Holmes Design Gallery on Bridge Road in Hobe Sound. On the right is interior designer Allen Holmes.

and stepping into its spiritual realm. In "Open Heart Sunset," for instance, Borse portrays not just the sunset, per say, but its blazing aura and its very quintessence.

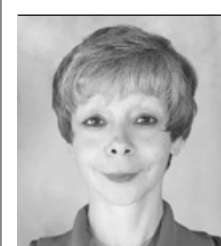
Predominance of red in Borse's art is symbolic. In Eastern Christian tradition, a red color symbolizes divine manifestation, which is why it's so intensely employed in icons considered to be windows to heaven. In some Indo-European languages, red is a synonym of beautiful. As an archetype, the red personifies fire, sun and vital creative energy – all the virtues of the sunshine in Florida.

"I am fascinated by the Florida landscape and strive to paint it in a different way than any other artist," Mr. Borse says. "While I stay on the edge of the fence, I can still create images that are representational, but have the essence of mystery and excitement that reality does not permit some imaginations to perceive. In essence I try and create an image that can be seen by the soul." Like icons, Borse's paintings send a finely tuned spiritual message.

If the king of the fauve painters, Henri Matisse, discovered alternative color values, Gary Borse goes much further. He reveals their inner and sacred meanings. We observe not just gradation of tones, but spiraling levels of visual metaphysics.

In "Quick Reflection," the blues strewn on the red fiery sky are mirrored in the water along with the solemn palm trees in amazing musical symmetry. In this painting, spatial and temporal elements merge in one integral style, allowing cross-sensory perception. We not only visualize the scenery, but also hear its swinging mood-music. The same structural principle has been applied even more emphatically in "Styx," "Mystic River," and his other pieces.

Some paintings have been identified in musical terms to emphasize a rhythmic interaction of colors and lines. Their visual lyricism reverberates in a multi-hued melody. In "Rhapsody in Blue," "Sunrise Symphony," "Moonlight Sonata," and "Intermezzo," Borse immerses us into a fluid polyphony of colorful images, which is not surprising at all. He is also a talented musi-



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cian, having performed jazz, rock and blues as bassist and vocalist throughout his life. As in jazz, improvised tunes of his landscapes fuse to create harmony, where all voices of nature come together.

The Chicago-born artist lives in Fairfield, Fla., raising cattle and riding horses when not at the easel. As a conservationist, he has participated in major "Paintout" events throughout the state. "There is underlying warmth and mystery in the landscape of Florida," he says. "If we don't clean up the litter and debris from dumping, as well as stopping it altogether, and we allow the bulldozer to ravage the state for development, draining our water supply, we will watch this all disappear in our lifetime."

America's conservation movement has been largely inspired by Thoreau's "Walden," as well as the Hudson River and The White Mountain art schools, which translated Thoreau's veneration of nature into spectacular images.

While their vertical mountain landscapes looked way too sublime and classic to become intimate, Gary Borse's universe horizon is just a line. As one of his works says, "See you on the other side." ■

